

# **PhD STUDENT HANDBOOK**

**School of Human Resources and Labor Relations  
Michigan State University<sup>i</sup>**

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## **WELCOME**

### **Welcome to the School of Human Resources and Labor Relations at Michigan State University!**

The School of Human Resources and Labor Relations (SHRLR), originally established in 1956, conducts an active program of research, education, and service to meet the needs for scholarship in employment-related matters. As a faculty we are deeply committed to training the next generation of scholars focused on work, human resources, and labor issues.

The purpose of this PhD program is to prepare students for academic careers in human resources or employment relations. In comparison with disciplinary programs (such as I/O Psychology, economics, or sociology), the focus of an HRLR PhD is on breadth across multiple disciplines rather than on specialization of a single disciplinary perspective. In comparison with management PhD programs, we study employment phenomena from the perspective of a wider array of actors including employees, managers, employers, unions, the government, and society at large.

Our doctoral students receive the education and training necessary to become highly skilled scholars both nationally and internationally. School alumni are found throughout the state of Michigan, the nation, and in several foreign countries.

The entire School is pleased that you have chosen our doctoral degree program. We look forward to getting to know you and working with you as you progress through your academic program.

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## INTRODUCTION

The *PhD Student Handbook* provides information about the School of Human Resources and Labor Relations, the curriculum, and College of Social Science and University policies that affect all doctoral students. In addition to this *Handbook*, students should become familiar with other documents that contain information that is pertinent to their doctoral student career. These include *Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities, as well as other University Regulations*, which can be found at (<http://splife.studentlife.msu.edu/graduate-student-rights-and-responsibilities>). MSU *Graduate Studies and Academic Programs* explain University academic standards and regulations governing graduate students. The MSU *Council of Graduate Students Handbook* is also very informative. The website address for linking to useful sites is [www.msu.edu/](http://www.msu.edu/). Students should also consult *Guidelines for Advising and Mentoring Graduate Students* (<https://grad.msu.edu/msu-guidelines-graduate-student-mentoring-advising>) to understand rights and responsibilities of the different parties involved in graduate students' mentoring and advising.

The PhD program of the school is administered by a PhD committee of faculty in conjunction with the Associate Director for Graduate Programs. The chair of the PhD committee is primarily responsible for assisting students with the procedures outlined in the *Handbook*, especially prior to and during the first year of study. During the first year of study, a student will be assigned a primary advisor who will serve as the student's Guidance Committee chair. We strongly encourage students to discuss their research interests and course plans with their primary advisor.

Familiarity with the contents of the *Handbook* is crucial for successfully completing your degree program. It describes resources available to you, your responsibilities as a graduate student of HRLR at Michigan State University, and academic policies and procedures at the school and university levels.

# DOCTORAL PROGRAM

## I. OBJECTIVES OF THE SHRLR DOCTORAL PROGRAM

Our doctoral program is a key part of our mission to be a global leader in the creation, teaching, and dissemination of knowledge about managing human resources, work, and the employment relationship.

To meet this challenge, students will learn to:

- integrate theoretical foundations across disciplines in novel ways
- employ the full range of scientific methodologies, statistical methods, and research designs in testing new theoretical contributions
- conduct research spanning local to global inquiries, ranging from micro-level individual and organizational analyses to macro-level organizational and policy analyses
- analyze the broader environmental contexts of organizations and the multi-level behaviors and decision-making of multiple stakeholders and actors
- evaluate the effects of alternative strategies, policies and practices on behavior and real-world outcomes.

The purpose of this PhD program is to prepare students for academic careers in human resources or employment relations.

## II. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The PhD program is interdisciplinary, requiring course work in both our School as well as across other disciplines. The courses outside our School are taken with appropriate approval from the Guidance Committee chair and committee and are organized around a student's specific area of scholarly interest.

In addition to the designated areas of coursework, all students must satisfactorily complete statistics and research methods courses. Finally, students must complete a comprehensive examination, a research competence paper and presentation, and a doctoral dissertation offering novel theoretical and empirical contributions to our field. The student works closely with a Guidance Committee of faculty members, which assists with program planning and monitors progress throughout his/her doctoral program. **Table 1** below provides an overview of student and faculty responsibilities regarding key deliverables in the first five years of graduate study.

**Table 1  
PhD Study Years 1-5**

Typical Timeline		Year 1				Year 2		Year 3		
Student's Responsibilities	Student enters the program fall semester	Select Guidance Committee chair	Decide on committee members	Call first committee meeting; enter degree plan into GradPlan electronically	Annual review YR 1	Continue course work	Annual Review YR 2	Complete Comprehensive Exam	Prepare and present Research Competence Paper	Annual Review YR 3
		Create plan of study								
Faculty Responsibilities		Assist with plan of study	Assist in selecting committee	Approve GradPlan degree plan (done electronically via routing from FTU system)	Assist with annual review	Evaluate comprehensive exam	Assist with annual review	Evaluate Research Competence Paper	Assist with annual review	
Forms/tasks to be completed by student and submitted to grad secretary <b>(BOLDED FORMS ARE MANDATORY)</b>		Plan of study	N/A	<b>Complete GradPlan degree plan online (gradplan.msu.edu) and submit online</b>	<b>Progress report</b> for annual review YR 1	<b>MSU Form: Record of Comprehensive Examinations for Doctoral Degree and Educational Specialist Degree Candidates</b>	<b>Progress report</b> for annual review YR 2	<b>Progress report</b> for annual review YR 3		
Due dates for forms and activities		By the end of the first semester	By the end of the first academic year	Recommended by end of first academic year; Max: fall semester of second academic year	End of first year	Submitted after student successfully completes comp exam; Recommended end of second year; Max: within 5 years of beginning the PhD program	End of second year	End of third year		

Typical Timeline	Year 4		Year 5				
<b>Student's Responsibilities</b>	Complete and defend dissertation proposal	Annual review YR 4	Work on and submit dissertation	Complete dissertation defense	Annual review YR 5	IRB closure by expiration date	Complete GradPlan degree audit and required forms (below); these steps must be completed to graduate
<b>Faculty Responsibilities</b>	Upon defense of dissertation proposal, all members sign a cover letter and forward it to Associate Director	Assist with annual review	Chair works with student on dissertation before it goes to committee; all read dissertation	Conduct oral examination (dissertation defense); sign Record of Completion of Requirements at end of successful defense	Assist with annual review	Assist with IRB closure by expiration date	Sign Approval Form
Forms/tasks to be completed by student and submitted to grad secretary ( <b>BOLDED FORMS ARE MANDATORY</b> )	<b>Dissertation Proposal</b>	<b>Progress report</b> for annual review YR 4	N/A	<b>MSU Form: Record of Completion of Requirements (Record of Dissertation and Oral Examination Requirement for Doctoral Degree Candidates)</b>	<b>Progress report</b> for annual review YR 5	<b>MSU Form: IRB Closure Form</b>	<b>MSU Form: Application for Graduation, Approval Form, &amp; Final Degree Certification</b> The Application for Graduation triggers the "Final Cert" form; once the latter is received by the grad office, we will approve and submit to College; see <a href="http://grad.msu.edu/etd/">http://grad.msu.edu/etd/</a> for details
<b>Due dates for forms and activities</b>	Completed at conclusion of dissertation proposal defense	End of fourth year	Typically during the fourth, and perhaps fifth, year	Completed at oral examination in defense of the dissertation; Recommended by end of fifth year; Max: 8 years after beginning the PhD program	End of fifth year	Prior to expiration date	Application for Graduation completed within first week of semester student intends to graduate; see Important Dates on Registrar's School Calendar webpage for deadlines



### III. DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Doctoral students must earn a minimum of sixty (60) graduate semester credits. The formal program of study for each HRLR doctoral student shall consist of a minimum of thirty-six (36) graduate semester credits of course work and twenty-four (24) graduate semester credits of dissertation research. At least twenty-one (21) credits for course work must be earned outside the School of Human Resources and Labor Relations. This formal program of study shall be recorded, before the end of the student's third semester of doctoral study, in the form known as the "Guidance Committee Report."

Full-time status prior to completion of all degree requirements up to engaging in your dissertation research requires enrollment in 6 or more credit hours each semester. Full-time status for doctoral students who have successfully completed all components of their comprehensive examination and are actively engaged in dissertation research is defined as enrollment in a minimum of 1 credit of HRLR 999. Rules on student status can be found on Academic Programs Catalog for Graduate Education:

(<https://reg.msu.edu/AcademicPrograms/Text.aspx?Section=111>).

Students who have earned credit for graduate-level credit course work before being admitted into the HRLR doctoral program may be allowed to transfer credits of prior course work toward their doctoral degree on a case by case basis. Any transfer must be approved (after the student enrolls in the doctoral program) by the Guidance Committee Chair, the Chair of the PhD committee, and the Associate Director for the Academic Programs. However, notwithstanding any transfer credit permitted, all doctoral students must earn at least thirty (30) credits of course work plus all the twenty-four (24) credits of dissertation research at Michigan State University after being admitted into the doctoral program.

#### **Important Dates**

<b>Guidance Committee Report</b>	<b>Core Exam</b>	<b>Research Competence Demonstration</b>	<b>Dissertation Proposal Defense</b>	<b>Dissertation Defense</b>
Before middle of 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	End of 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	End of 3 <sup>rd</sup> Year	Before end of 4 <sup>th</sup> Year	Before the end of 5 <sup>th</sup> Year

#### **Forms to be submitted**

Various forms must be submitted as certain requirements are passed. The forms listed below can be obtained from the graduate school GradPlan website: (<https://gradplan.msu.edu/>).

GradPlan was developed for doctoral students to develop their program of study, record committee approval, and make notes on all of their requirements as they are completed. Committee selection, course selection, scheduling and record of comprehensive exams, as well as the defense of the dissertation proposal and final defense of the dissertation, should be recorded through GradPlan.

By the end of the first year in the doctoral program, a student should have a guidance chair and committee, and have completed a degree plan on GradPlan (<https://gradplan.msu.edu/>). The committee members you list must be approved by MSU to sit on Guidance Committees. In your degree plan, you must list all of the courses you have taken or plan to take that will contribute to your PhD.

Any changes that occur after the plan has been submitted (e.g., changes to your Guidance Committee or chair) can be added to GradPlan by the student.

Students are expected to complete their comprehensive exams within 5 years from the date of the first course that counts toward the PhD degree program. You have a **maximum of 8 years** from the date of the first course that counts toward the PhD degree program to finish.

Time extension requests need to be requested the semester before hitting the expiration deadline. Time extensions are granted through the College and Graduate School for an extension for completion of a comprehensive exam or a degree program. It is very difficult to receive more than one extension. Extension requests can be downloaded here:

<https://grad.msu.edu/sites/default/files/content/forms/Extension%20Request%202018%20Fillable.pdf>

## **Requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Human Resources and Labor Relations**

There are four major components to the doctoral program of study: (A) Course work; (B) Comprehensive examination, (C) Research Competence Demonstration; and (D) Dissertation research.

### **A. Course Work**

Students will complete course work and seminars within the School of Human Resources and Labor Relations, and within other departments in the university. Students will be required to pass comprehensive examinations based on their course work, to demonstrate research competency by writing an empirical research paper, and to defend their dissertation successfully. Students must complete a minimum of sixty (60) graduate semester credits of required course work in the following four categories:

- 1) Complete the following courses (12 credits):
  - HRLR 991A Theoretical Perspectives in Human Resource Management
  - HRLR 991B Theoretical Perspectives in Labor and Employment Relations
  - HRLR 992A Research Perspectives in Human Resource Management
  - HRLR 992B Research Perspectives in Labor and Employment Relations
- 2) Complete **three doctoral level statistics/research methods courses** within other departments approved by the student's doctoral committee (9 credits):

- 3) Complete **five doctoral level courses in other departments** approved by the student's advisor (15 credits). Departments may include, but are not limited to:
  - Economics
  - Management
  - Political Science
  - Psychology
- 4) Complete 24 credits of HRLR 999 Doctoral Dissertation Research.

### **Sample Schedule**

It is expected that a full-time doctoral student who does not transfer any credit should be able to satisfy the minimum course work requirements in two years following a schedule comparable to the one listed below.

Fall Semester 1: 9 credits.

- First statistics/research methods (3 credits)
- HRLR 991A or HRLR 991B (3 credits)
- Doctoral level course in other department (3 Credits)

Spring Semester 1: 9 credits.

- Second statistics/research methods course (3 credits)
- HRLR 992A or HRLR 992B (3 credits)
- Doctoral level course in other department (3 Credits)

Fall Semester 2: 9 credits.

- Third statistics/research methods course (3 credits)
- HRLR 991A or HRLR 991B (3 credits)
- Doctoral level course in other department (3 Credits)

Spring Semester 2: 9 credits.

- HRLR 992A or HRLR 992B (3 credits)
- Doctoral level course in other department (3 Credits)
- Doctoral level course in other department (3 Credits)

### **B. Core Comprehensive Examination**

#### *1. Purpose*

The Comprehensive Examination is designed to test the fundamental knowledge and preparation that the student has developed based on readings in the Human Resource Management and Labor and Employment Relations seminars. Through this Comprehensive Examination, the student

demonstrates knowledge of the literature that indicates the student is ready to move into the dissertation phase of his/her doctoral program.

The Core Comprehensive Exam serves two functions. First, the Comprehensive Examination serves as an **assessment** tool by which faculty determine the extent to which the student has mastered the content areas related to the student's formal program of study. Second, preparing for the Comprehensive Examination is a **developmental** experience, which allows the student to integrate materials discussed or read in the various graduate courses within the student's formal program of study, in addition to topics related specifically to the student's research interests.

Students must be enrolled when taking Comprehensive Examination. **Full-time status prior to completion of all degree requirements up to engaging in your dissertation research requires enrollment in 6 or more credit hours each semester.** Full-time status for doctoral students who have successfully completed all components of their Comprehensive Examination and are **actively engaged in dissertation research is defined as enrollment in a minimum of 1 credit of HRLR 999.**

## 2. Sequencing

The core comprehensive exam should be taken following the completion of the PhD seminars HRLR 991A, 991B and HRLR 992A, 992B. This will normally be **prior to fifth semester** of study.

## 3. Major and Minor Declaration

Working with his/her/their Guidance Committee chair, the student will declare a major and a minor area for the exam from **two domains**: a) Human Resources and b) Labor and Employment Relations.

The major field is the field in which individual expects to do research (e.g., related to dissertation and research interests). For the major, a pass would reflect a competent ability to demonstrate familiarity with major research concepts, history, and current state and future directions of the field. In addition, in order to receive a grade of "pass," a student must demonstrate a competent ability to both critique research and identify gaps, or problems in the field and to pose and answer basic research questions. For example, a student should be able to systematically critique an article and be able to discuss the research of major scholars in the field. The minor field is the field that the student does not plan to do research for their dissertation. **For the minor field, a passing performance would demonstrate sufficient knowledge to teach an introductory course in the minor domain and make linkages to the major area.**

## 4. Coverage

The **Core Comprehensive Examination** will draw on the PhD graduate seminars and core foundational knowledge that a student has acquired in the seminars. As students enter the program with varying degrees of knowledge of our key subject areas, each student should review the material covered in the four graduate seminars. In addition, students will review a readings

list developed by major faculty in the area and any customized readings specific to the student's interest.

### 5. Format

The Core Comprehensive Examination is developed by an examining committee comprised of faculty who teach the HRLR PhD seminars (HRLR 991A, 991B, 992A, 992B) and the chair of the student's Guidance Committee. Within 6 months after the student has taken the four seminars, the student should request that their Guidance Committee Chair and the chair of the PhD committee contact the examining committee to prepare exam questions for the particular student. The exam will include five questions (one from each of the four seminar professors and one from the chair). The student is required to complete all five questions. Each faculty member writing exam questions (representing the examining committee) may choose to have the student answer their question through an in-class (no notes or books) or a take-home format. The examining committee will communicate to the student the format the faculty members have selected to be used for answering each question at the time the student requests the examining committee begin preparing exam questions.

### 6. Grading

1. Who. The examining committee shall include the faculty from HRLR 992A, 992B, 991A, 991B and the student's chair. If the committee is fewer than three people, it shall include one additional faculty member in the student's major area who is on the student's Guidance Committee. The examining committee will decide the grade for the comprehensive examination.
2. What. The questions for the major mainly relate to research issues in the field, from theoretical groundings to future directions. This exam is graded high pass, pass or fail. The student receives 2 questions in the major area and 2 questions in the minor area with the 5<sup>th</sup> question from the chair also in the major area. The same questions are posed for major and minor, but they are graded on different standards.
3. How. Comprehensive exams are given in the early fall and early spring semesters if PhD students have applied to take the examination. PhD students must inform the chair of their committee and the chair of the PhD committee of their desire to take the examination by May 1 for the early fall examination, and by November 1 for the early spring examination. The Guidance/Examining Committee Chair and the chair of the PhD committee will work with the faculty who have taught the PhD seminars to determine the starting date and time for the Comprehensive Examination.

The chair of the PhD committee informs, in writing, the Associate Director for the Academic Programs of the starting date and time, as well as of the major/minor areas and reading materials determined for the student's Comprehensive Examination. These lists of major/minor areas and associated materials become part of the student's academic file.

While the student prepares for the Comprehensive Examination, the chair of the PhD committee coordinates the development of examination questions.

The chair of the PhD committee distributes the student's answers to the corresponding members of the Examining Committee and establishes a time schedule for the evaluation and grading of such answers. This schedule shall ensure that an overall grade is obtained and communicated to the student no later than one month after the student returned his/her answers.

The chair of the PhD committee notifies, in writing, the student and the Associate Director for the Academic Programs of the overall grade and of the grades received by the student in each of the questions. This notification must occur no later than one month after the student completes the examination.

### *Exam Grading:*

The comprehensive examination represents a validation of the student's formal program of study that is recorded in the student's Guidance Committee Report. In order to pass the examination, students must show they have a sufficient knowledge of the literature. Students must also show they have developed the critical thinking, analysis, and synthesis competencies that make them ready to move into the dissertation phase of their doctoral program of study.

For each answer, the corresponding member of the Examining Committee shall issue one of the following four grades: high pass, pass, low pass, or fail.

The criteria for deciding the grade for each question will include the following: (1) understanding of major concepts in the area; (2) ability to compare and critique theories and models historically important in the area; (3) knowledge of the extent to which major theories and models have been supported by research; and (4) awareness of recent developments and trends in theorizing and research. We will expect more depth and comprehensiveness for answers of the major questions.

A good or "pass" answer demonstrates the student's ability to integrate and synthesize concepts, models, and theories covered during the student's formal program of study. Also, a pass answer demonstrates that the student understands critical or seminal pieces of the literature in the corresponding area. Good answers resemble a solid draft for the "Introduction" and "Literature Review" sections in scholarly journal articles.

In order for the student to receive an "overall pass" for the Core Comprehensive Examination, the student must receive a "pass" grade for each of the two parts of the Examination (a. Human Resources and b. Employment and Labor Relations). To receive a "pass" on a section of the Examination the student must receive a pass on all questions. Alternatively, a student can pass a section if they initially receive a low pass on one question in the section. In this case, the student will be required to write an additional essay related to the question as "low pass." The topic and size of these essays will be determined by the corresponding member of the Examining Committee and will be based on the student's performance in the Examination.

Students who receive a "fail" or more than one "low pass" grade questions within a section will be considered to have failed that section. If a student fails one or both sections of the Core

Comprehensive Examination, he/she shall schedule a second examination on the sections that he/she failed to be administered no later than six (6) months after the first examination. Failure to pass the Core Comprehensive Exam for a second time will result in dismissal from the doctoral program.

### **C. Demonstration of Research Competence**

#### *Purpose:*

The main purpose of the requirement for doctoral HRLR students to demonstrate Research Competence is to validate the students' basic preparation and skills to conduct independent empirical work.

The ability to conduct independent empirical work is essential for HRLR doctoral students because the PhD degree is intended to prepare students for a career as academic scholars in tenure-track positions at research-oriented universities. Furthermore, doctoral HRLR students are required to develop, complete, and defend a dissertation before receiving the PhD degree.

The demonstration of research competence indicates the students have developed sufficient understanding of the research process and methodologies to succeed in the dissertation phase of their program of study.

#### *Timing:*

Students must pass the Research Competence Demonstration **before the beginning of the fourth year** of doctoral study to maintain acceptable academic standing.

Students must have completed at least six credits of graduate course work in statistical techniques and/or research methods before beginning work on their Research Competence paper.

#### *Standards:*

To fulfill the Research Competence requirement, students must plan, write, submit, and present a paper that adequately demonstrates their research ability. This research paper should be of journal article form and of length appropriate to its subject matter.

The members of the student's Guidance Committee who are also in the SHRLR faculty will determine its acceptability once the Research Competence paper is completed and presented to them. Students will make an oral presentation to the SHRLR faculty members in their Guidance Committee, explaining and defending the main points in their Research Competence paper. When a student satisfies the Research Competence requirement, her/his Guidance Committee Chair will notify the Associate Director for the Academic Programs in writing.

Students and Guidance Committee members who appraise these papers should consider that these papers are expected to be of journal article length and form but that this does not imply that

Research Competence papers must achieve the quality of ready-to-publish journal articles. Research Competence papers are expected to contain only sufficiently developed sections that:

- a) review literature and support one or more clearly stated central proposition(s) and their testable implications, hypotheses, or research questions;
- b) discuss the types and sources of evidence relevant to the proposition(s) and related hypotheses or research questions;
- c) present actual evidence and apply the appropriate technique(s) for its analysis; and
- d) clearly state the conclusions and implications of the empirical investigation.

The following criteria shall be considered to determine the acceptability of any Research Competence paper:

- 1) The subject of the Research Competence paper belongs to the broad fields of employment relations and/or human resource management or to one of their related disciplines. These related-disciplines may include labor economics, labor history, labor law, sociology of work and occupations, industrial/organizational psychology, management, and organizational behavior.
- 2) The Research Competence paper should be organized around one or more central propositions and their testable implications (hypotheses or research questions). These central propositions need not be original. Indeed, a careful replication of a published study using data from a new setting or a different time period is entirely acceptable.
- 3) The Research Competence paper **should be empirical**. Students should bring evidence to bear on the central propositions, hypotheses, or research questions that drive their investigation. However, data used need not be originally collected for this project. Although students may gather primary data for the Research Competence paper, it is acceptable to use secondary data such as government statistics, archives, and data sets from research projects conducted by others. Particularly, students are advised to investigate whether SHRLR faculty have data sets which may be useful for Research Competence papers.
- 4) The method(s) of analysis should be consistent with the central proposition(s) and its (their) testable implications (hypotheses or research questions). Students may use qualitative or quantitative analytical methods or a mixture of both depending on the research hypotheses or questions driving their investigation.
- 5) Students must assume individual leadership, control, and responsibility for the “methods” and “results” portions of the Research Competence paper. That is, students must be capable of explaining and defending their choices regarding data analysis and interpretation.

The student’s Guidance Committee will determine by majority vote if the student has met the above criteria for the research competency paper. If so, the student will be considered to have passed this requirement. Failure to meet the above-specified requirements for research competence could resolve in removal from the doctoral program.



### Teaching During the Doctoral Program

Given that graduates of our doctoral program will be placed primarily in leading universities and colleges as professors, it is to our graduates' advantage to develop excellent teaching skills. It is our objective therefore, to have students serve as teaching assistants. As teaching assistants, students will be mentored by faculty to whom they are assigned. Students and faculty will be encouraged to meet to discuss teaching experiences, focusing on those factors and processes that lead to highly effective teaching. To the extent possible, students will also have opportunities to teach at least one course prior to graduation. Most opportunities for teaching assignments will be available at the undergraduate level through our major, leadership minor, and on-line instruction. Qualified doctoral students who have obtained a master's degree may also be assigned to teach in our professional master's program.

The following links are useful resources from the College and Graduate School on teacher training:

- <https://grad.msu.edu/tap>
- <https://socialscience.msu.edu/graduate/cert-college-teaching.html>

#### **IV. FORMATION OF THE GUIDANCE COMMITTEE**

Individual students are primarily responsible for planning and executing a formal program of study that will suit their interests regarding employment-related scholarship and that will prepare them to pursue academic careers in research-oriented universities. To advise and support them in this endeavor, students must assemble a Guidance Committee and also may consult with the Chair of the PhD committee or the SHRLR Associate Director for Graduate Studies.

According to Michigan State University policy, each graduate student admitted to a doctoral program has the responsibility of forming a Guidance Committee. The Guidance Committee shall be formed within the first two semesters of doctoral study. Guidance Committees usually consist of four regular (tenure track) MSU faculty members. School of Human Resources and Labor Relations policy mandates that the committee shall be chaired by a member of the SHRLR faculty and must include at least three other SHRLR faculty.

The Guidance Committee Chair is the principal advisor for planning the formal program of study, doctoral students should select their Guidance Committee Chair early in their second semester of doctoral study. The rest of the committee's members should be defined by the end of the first academic year.

At that time a meeting of the whole committee is held to discuss the student's degree plan. The student should be prepared to meet with her/his committee and present a tentative plan. After the student and committee have met and developed a degree plan, the student should go on to GradPlan (at [gradplan.msu.edu](http://gradplan.msu.edu)) and enter information about their degree plan. This plan will include courses to be taken, tentative comp exam topics, and the tentative dissertation topic, among other things. Once the degree plan is complete, the student should submit it online by

clicking the “submit” button. The plan will then route to the graduate secretary, the committee members, the chair of the PhD committee, the Associate Director for Graduate Programs, and the College of Social Science for their approval. Any changes, such as new committee members, changes in courses, etc., should be made by the student at by logging back into GradPlan. Students will have access to GradPlan for two years post-graduation

The responsibilities of the Guidance Committee include:

- Advising graduate students on their degree plan and research activities.
- Mentoring graduate students about research practice

## **V. FORMATION OF DISSERTATION COMMITTEE**

Individual members of the Dissertation Committee may be different than those who served on the Guidance Committee. Reasons for selecting new committee members for dissertation work may include a change in the focus of the student’s interest, scheduling conflicts (e.g., a faculty member going on sabbatical), or mutual agreement between the student and a faculty member, etc. It is the responsibility of the student to negotiate any replacements on the committee with the members who are involved, and to inform the PhD program director. Change in membership must also be recorded via GradPlan by the student.

In selecting a dissertation advisor, students should consider the faculty members research interests, expertise, and mentoring style.

Responsibilities of the dissertation advisor include:

- Ensuring that graduate students receive information about requirements and policies of the graduate program.
- Advising graduate students on developing a program plan, including appropriate course work, research or creative activity, and on available resources.
- Advising graduate students on the selection of a dissertation topic with realistic prospects for successful completion within an appropriate time frame and on the formation of a Guidance Committee.
- Providing training and oversight in creative activities, research rigor, theoretical and technical aspects of the thesis or dissertation research, and in professional integrity.
- Encouraging graduate students to stay abreast of the literature and cutting-edge ideas in the field.
- Helping graduate students to develop professional skills in writing reports, papers, and grant proposals, making professional presentations, establishing professional networks, interviewing, and evaluating manuscripts and papers.
- Providing regular feedback on the progress of graduate students toward degree completion, including feedback on research activities, course work, and teaching, and constructive criticism if the progress does not meet expectations.

- Helping graduate students develop into successful professionals and colleagues, including encouraging students to participate and disseminate results of research activities in the appropriate scholarly or public forums.
- Facilitating career development, including advising graduate students on appropriate job and career options, as well as on the preparation of application materials for appropriate fellowship, scholarship, and other relevant opportunities.
- Writing letters of reference for appropriate fellowship, scholarship, award, and job opportunities.
- Providing for supervision and advising of graduate students when the faculty advisor is on leave or extended absence.

Should the dissertation advisor leave MSU before the student completes her degree, the School will work with the student to find another faculty member to serve as a dissertation advisor.

## **VI. THESIS/DISSERTATION DEFENSE AND FINAL ORAL EXAMINATION**

A doctoral dissertation on a significant proposition in human resources or employment and labor relations, as appropriate, is required of each doctoral student. It is subject to University and College rules concerning doctoral dissertations, including the requirement to enroll in 24 credits of doctoral dissertation credits. The dissertation must conform to good scholarly practice in employment and labor relations and human resources. A dissertation committee directs the dissertation work of the student.

The first formal step in the dissertation process is the submission of a written proposal to the dissertation committee. A dissertation proposal includes a statement of the research question and a discussion of its significance, a literature review, a discussion of the research design, and a description of the data to be used in the analysis. This written proposal will be presented orally to the chair and other members of the dissertation committee. When all members of the committee are satisfied with the proposal, the proposal is submitted to the Associate Director with a cover letter signed by the members of the committee indicating acceptance.

Students must successfully defend their dissertation proposal by their eighth semester in the doctoral program to maintain acceptable academic standing. Students who do not have an accepted proposal by their eighth semester may have any financial support provided by the HRLR suspended until the semester following their completion of these requirements. Students must be enrolled for at least 1 credit during the semester in which they defend their dissertation.

When the student is ready to submit their dissertation for review, the dissertation committee administers an oral examination, known as the dissertation defense. In order to be accepted, the members of the dissertation committee must approve the dissertation, with no more than one dissenting vote. The committee may decide on any one of four possible outcomes of the dissertation examination: **(a)** dissertation approved; **(b)** dissertation approved contingent on minor revisions; **(c)** dissertation not approved -- student instructed to make major revisions and to resubmit the dissertation for a second examination; **(d)** dissertation rejected --committee

recommends to the Associate Director for the Academic Program that the student be withdrawn from the PhD program.

Students are expected to complete their comprehensive exams within 5 years from the date of the first course that counts toward the PhD degree program. You have a maximum of 8 years from the date of the first course that counts toward the PhD degree program to finish.

Time extension requests need to be requested the semester before hitting the expiration deadline.

Time extensions are granted through the College and Graduate School for an extension for completion of a comprehensive exam or a degree program. Extension requests can be downloaded here:

<https://grad.msu.edu/sites/default/files/content/forms/Extension%20Request%202018%20Fillable.pdf>

During the semester in which students complete their dissertation, there are four steps required by the University. First, students must hand in the final version of the dissertation to the dissertation committee chair for review. Approximately two weeks later, this version with any changes suggested by the chair should be distributed to other members of the dissertation committee for them to read prior to the dissertation defense. At that time the student shall notify the Associate Director for the Academic Program that a defense has been scheduled. The defense should be approximately four weeks after this notification. Students should consult the University Schedule of Courses for the exact deadlines for each of these steps in the semester when they plan to complete and defend their dissertation. Students should realize that the time allowed for each step is fairly short. This does not permit time for major revisions. As such, students should not start this process until they are fairly certain that they will have completed a dissertation that their committee is likely to approve.

## **VII. DEPARTMENTAL POLICIES: ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

To effectively monitor students' progress, the doctoral committee will conduct annual performance reviews meetings, which will be open to all regular faculty members. Before the end of the Spring Semester, each student and his/her faculty Guidance Committee Chair shall provide a written progress summary report stating the progress the student has made to date and a recommendation concerning whether the student will be permitted to continue in the doctoral program.

The report shall cover the student's progress and performance (vis-à-vis the Guidance Committee Report and School's policy) in terms of the four major requirements for completion of a doctoral program of study: (a) Course work; (b) Research Competence Demonstration; (c) Core Comprehensive Examinations, and (d) Dissertation research.

Students must be making satisfactory progress toward a degree to remain in the program. This includes meeting all the deadlines for the program requirements, passing the comprehensive exams, maintaining a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0, and having no more than 2 required courses with grades below 3.0. Should the student's progress be deemed unsatisfactory, they will receive a written warning by the Associate Director for Graduate Programs. A second such written warning will result in removal from the program.

The progress summary report will become a part of the departmental file on the student. The student may make a request to the graduate program administrator to view his/her academic records.

## **Student Responsibilities**

### **A. Academic Performance**

Per MSU academic standards, the accumulation of grades below 3.0 (including N grades in the P-N grading system) in more than two courses of three or more credits each shall result in the removal of the student from the program. A graduate student who falls below an overall 3.0 grade point average (GPA) in any given semester will be put on academic probation. During the next semester, the student must raise her/his overall grade point average to a 3.0 or be dismissed from the graduate program. Credit is not awarded by the University for grades below 2.0 in graduate courses.

### **B. Academic and Professional Integrity**

(<https://www.deanofstudents.msu.edu/academic-integrity>)

Academic integrity refers to fraud and/or misrepresentation in written class assignments, including but are not limited to:

- 1) Representing work of another person, including materials from the professional literature and data, as one's own (plagiarism).
- 2) Submitting a written assignment prepared for one class as original work in another class, or in the comp exam (self-plagiarism).
- 3) Representing data that were not actually collected, and/or results that were not actually analyzed in the way they are presented.

See also General Student Regulation (<http://splife.studentlife.msu.edu/regulations/general-student-regulations>), Protection of Scholarship and Grades (<http://splife.studentlife.msu.edu/regulations/selected/integrity-of-scholarship-and-grades>), Spartan Life. Such conduct constitutes grounds for disciplinary action, including dismissal from the program.

Professional integrity involves conducting oneself in a professional manner in courses, graduate assistantships (research or teaching), and all other contexts in which the student is engaged in an MSU-related function or role or is representing MSU. See the section on non-academic reviews on pp. 56-57. (<http://splife.studentlife.msu.edu/student-rights-and-responsibilities-at-michigan-state-university>)

### **C. False Information**

Fraud and misrepresentation include, but are not limited to:

- 1) False statements in applications for financial aid.
- 2) Identifying oneself as a student in the School of Human Resources and Labor Relations without being officially registered and/or paying fees.
- 3) Falsifying degrees or professional credentials to clients or agencies.

### **VIII. DEPARTMENTAL POLICIES: INTEGRITY AND SAFETY IN RESEARCH AND CREATIVE ACTIVITIES**

Integrity in research and creative activities embodies a range of practices that includes:

- Honesty in proposing, performing, and reporting research
- Recognition of prior work
- Confidentiality in peer review
- Disclosure of potential conflicts of interest
- Compliance with institutional and sponsor requirements
- Protection of human subjects in the conduct of research (see MSU Human Research Protection Program, <https://hrpp.msu.edu>)
- Collegiality in scholarly interactions and sharing of resources
- Adherence to fair and open relationships between senior scholars and their coworkers

Each of these practices is outlined in the *Guidelines for Integrity in Research and Creative Activities* (<https://grad.msu.edu/sites/default/files/content/researchintegrity/guidelines.pdf>) which students are given upon entering the PhD program. Moreover, students will be required, per university requirements, to complete training on responsible conduct of research throughout their doctoral education.

Students who violate these practices of professional integrity will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by the PhD committee and may be removed from the PhD program. Violations of research misconduct may also be reported to the university's Research Integrity Officer ([www.rio.msu.edu](http://www.rio.msu.edu)).

### **IX. WORK RELATED POLICIES AND GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS**

Michigan State University Teaching Assistants are employed according to the terms outlined in the Graduate Employees Union Collective Bargaining Agreement, available at <http://geuatmsu.org/about/geu-contract/>.

Teaching Assistantship duties normally take one of three forms: the assistant may be assigned to lead discussion sections in one of the introductory survey courses, may serve as a grader in an undergraduate course with a large enrollment; or serve as the principal instructor for a course. In any case the assistant is expected faithfully to carry out the duties assigned by the course instructor. For half-time assistants these duties will normally average 20 hours of work per week.

It rests with each instructor to make clear at the beginning of each semester his/her expectations with respect to such features of the assistant's work as the keeping of office hours, other counseling activities, and the timely handling of papers and examinations. Assistants are required to attend lecture sections of the courses to which they have been assigned, even when they may previously have assisted for the same professor in the same course. While every reasonable effort will be made to match assignments with the academic interests of the assistants, in practice students must expect to be assigned to courses lying outside their preferred fields of study when enrollment and other considerations make this necessary. The failure of assistants to carry out assigned duties is regarded by the HRLR as prejudicial to the effective discharge of its instructional and administrative functions. It may therefore result in immediate termination of an assistantship appointment.

In accordance with the terms outlined in the Graduate Employees Union Collective Bargaining Agreement (<http://geuatmsu.org/about/geu-contract/>), when employment performance is unsatisfactory, the employment duties may be reduced and employment fraction and pay may be reduced correspondingly, or employment may be terminated. In cases of unsatisfactory employment performance, the matter will first be discussed with the Employee prior to any action being taken. If the Employer determines that the existing situation can be corrected by the Employee and is of such a nature that correction is appropriate, the Employee will be given not less than one calendar week from date of discussion to make the correction. A written summary of such a discussion will be available at the written request of the Employee provided the request is received within forty-eight (48) hours of the discussion. When allowed by law, a copy of this summary will be provided to the Union.

Moreover, the parties recognize the authority of the Employer to suspend, discharge, or take other appropriate disciplinary action against Employees for just cause. Discharge may result from an accumulation of minor infractions as well as for a single serious infraction. Whenever it is appropriate, the Employer shall give the Employee advance notice of its intent to hold an investigatory interview. An Employee shall be entitled to the presence of a Union Representative at an investigatory interview if he/she/they has reasonable grounds to believe that the interview may be used to support disciplinary action against him/her/they, and he/she/they requests representation. If any discipline is taken against an Employee, the Employee will receive a copy of the disciplinary action. In the event that an Employee is discharged, the Employee will receive a copy of the notice of discharge, including a summary of the reasons for the discharge. When allowed by law, the Union will be provided a copy of any notice of discharge. An Employee may appeal a suspension or discharge beginning at Step Two of the Grievance Procedure.

The terms which govern the appointment of graduate assistants are set by the College of Social Sciences and contain the following important provisions:

- Appointment to a graduate assistantship for all or part of a given academic year carries no presumption with regard to preferred treatment when reappointment is requested.
- The appointment of graduate assistants is made at Level I, II and III as determined by the University contract with the GEU. Students enter at Level I by having less than one year of experience as a graduate assistant or a full support fellow. Level II students have a master's degree or equivalent and/or two semesters of experience as a graduate assistant or a full support fellow in the employing unit. Level III is achieved when 6 semesters as a graduate assistant have been completed, provided that students have also attained a master's degree or equivalent. The GA experience must be in the employing unit or in a department considered relevant by the chairperson or employing unit.
- Stipends at all levels are set annually to take account of the changing pay structure within the University.

Appointment dates are listed below. The employee is required to be on campus and available to their supervisor during the duration of these dates:

- Fall Semester – August 16 to December 31
- Spring Semester – January 1 to May 15
- Summer Semester – May 16 to August 15

### **Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct Policy**

All TAs and RAs must complete MSU's on-line training about the Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct Policy. You will receive notifications about this mandatory training from the university on an annual basis. For more information about the training, see <http://titleix.msu.edu/learn-more/online-education-programs.html>. The Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct Policy is available at: <https://civilrights.msu.edu/policies/relationship-violence-and-sexual-misconduct-and-title-ix-policy.html>.

### **English Language Proficiency for International Students**

According to MSU's Academic Programs Catalog "All international applicants and applicants for graduate programs whose first language is not English must be able to demonstrate their English language proficiency. Those applicants who do not demonstrate English language proficiency must fulfill the requirements stated below as part of the admissions procedure. Graduate students may be admitted on regular status or on provisional status."

MSU candidates for TA appointments who were required to demonstrate English proficiency as a condition for regular admission to Michigan State University must also demonstrate that they meet a minimum standard of proficiency in spoken English before they can be assigned teaching work that involves oral communication with undergraduate students. Those international teaching assistants (ITAs) may meet this requirement in one of the following ways:

- Presenting a TOEFL iBT speaking section score of 27 or higher.
- Receiving a score of 50 or higher on the MSU Speaking Test
- Taking AAE 451 or AAE 452 (ITA language support courses) and receiving a score of



50 or higher on the ITA Oral Interaction Test (ITAOI).

Those ITAs who received a waiver of the TOEFL or of other accepted tests of English proficiency for admission, must also meet the requirement of proficiency in spoken English before they are assigned to teaching work that involves oral communication with undergraduate students. To meet this requirement, those ITAs may use any of three options listed above.

Individual exceptions from these requirements (on a case-by-case basis in rare circumstances) will be considered by the Graduate School in consultation with the ELC upon the request of the department and with the endorsement of the Associate Dean of the College.

For non-TA duties, the HRLR does not require the SPEAK test.

### **TA Professionalism**

As a TA you are expected to contribute positively to MSU's teaching mission. You are expected to fulfill your role with professionalism, which includes timeliness, decorum, concern for the learning environment created for students, responsiveness to feedback from students and the course instructor, and accuracy and fairness in grading. Supporting the course instructor and the students is the critical role of a TA. HRLR expects TAs to show initiative, a willingness to take on tasks to help the course run smoothly, attention to detail, and diligence in performing all tasks. There are also a number of MSU policies that you need to familiarize yourself with as a TA.

- All instructors and TAs are required to be familiar with the MSU Code of Teaching (<http://splife.studentlife.msu.edu/regulations/selected/code-of-teaching-responsibility>).
- All instructors and TAs are required to be familiar and follow the Academic Integrity policy (<https://reg.msu.edu/AcademicPrograms/Print.aspx?Section=534>)
- All MSU employees (including TAs) are mandated to report instances of sexual harassment, sexual violence, sexual misconduct, sexual exploitation, stalking, and relationship violence that are observed or learned about in their professional capacity and involve a member of the university community or which occurred at a university-sponsored event or on university property. More information can be found here (<https://civilrights.msu.edu/>).
- MSU faculty, instructors, and TAs are required to be familiar with student rights under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (<https://reg.msu.edu/ROInfo/Notices/PrivacyGuidelines.aspx>).
- It is SHRLR policy that faculty, staff, and TAs report concerns about student behaviors that may present an imminent risk to the health and safety of the individual or others to emergency services by calling 911 or the MSU Police Department non-emergency line at 517-355-2221. Further, faculty, staff, and TAs are encouraged to forward information about students experiencing non-emergency emotional distress or behavioral concerns to the MSU Behavioral Threat Assessment Team via the online reporting form (<http://btat.msu.edu/>). This reporting follows the BTAT Green Folder protocol (<https://msu.edu/insidemsu/assets/images/BTAT-Green-Folder.pdf>) that includes guidance about reporting and how to support students during crises.

## **Accommodations for Disabilities**

MSU employees, including student employees, can request reasonable accommodations for the workplace. The Statement of Employee Accommodation Determination (SEAD) is the primary method of documentation that enables employees to validate and communicate their needs to supervisors. Reasonable employee accommodations are determined through a partnership between RCPD, MSU's Office of Employee Relations (OER) Accommodations Specialist, the employee, and the supervisor. The SEAD is individualized and cannot be generated until the employee completes the following steps:

1. Identify and Register a Disability (<https://www.rcpd.msu.edu/get-started>). This includes self-identifying through the RCPD MyProfile ([https://login.msu.edu/?App=RCPD\\_Profile](https://login.msu.edu/?App=RCPD_Profile)) and submitting sufficient medical documentation (<https://www.rcpd.msu.edu/documentation>).
2. Request Accommodations
3. Participate in the employee accommodation review process, including a needs assessment meeting with RCPD and OER and submission of a current position description.

The OER Accommodations Specialist also engages with the supervisor regarding the accommodation requests prior to determination and production of the SEAD. For a comprehensive overview of the employee accommodation process, please see the MSU Disability and Reasonable Accommodations Policy (<https://civilrights.msu.edu/assets/documents/MSU-Disability-and-Reasonable-Accommodation-Policy.pdf>).

## **Medical Leave for illness, injury, or pregnancy**

If you are unable to fulfill the duties of your GA appointment because of illness, injury, or pregnancy, please contact the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities ([www.rcpd.msu.edu](http://www.rcpd.msu.edu)) and request for accommodations. SHRLR will make accommodations in line with RCPD determinations.

Following MSU policy (<https://reg.msu.edu/AcademicPrograms/Text.aspx?Section=111#s351>), a graduate assistant unable to fulfill the duties of their appointment because of illness or injury shall notify the PhD Committee Chair as soon as circumstances permit. Similarly, a graduate assistant unable to fulfill the duties of the appointment because of pregnancy shall notify the PhD Committee Chair as soon as circumstances permit.

During the illness, injury, or pregnancy SHRLR will adjust (reduce, waive, or reschedule) the graduate assistant's duties as those duties and the assistant's physical circumstances reasonably dictate. If total absence from duties becomes necessary, SHRLR will maintain the stipend of the appointment, provided the graduate assistant is still enrolled, for a period of two months, or to the end of the appointment period or of the semester, whichever should occur first.

The graduate assistant shall have the right to return to the assistantship, within the original terms of the appointment, at such time as they are able to reassume the duties of the position.

A graduate assistant planning to take a leave under this policy shall notify the PhD Committee Chair as soon as circumstances permit.

### **Parental Leave**

If you adopt a child while being funded as a GA, you are entitled to adoption leave of up to two (2) months, the first week of which will be paid by SHRLR and the balance of which will be unpaid, to commence on or before the date of adoption, as determined by you.

If you become a parent by birth and are not otherwise covered by the pregnancy leave policy, you are entitled to parental leave of up to two (2) months, the first week of which will be paid by SHRLR and the balance of which will be unpaid to commence on or before the date of birth as determined by you. Additional unpaid leave may be arranged on an ad hoc basis, as mutually agreed with SHRLR.

Eligibility for adoption leave or parental leave is determined under the following conditions: (1) It must be completed within six (6) weeks of the birth or adoption of a child under the age of six (6); (2) It may not extend beyond your previously scheduled appointment end date; and (3) It must be requested in writing no less than four (4) weeks prior to the scheduled start of the leave.

### **Grief Absence Policy**

For all graduate students requesting accommodations for a grief absence, it is the responsibility of the student to: a) notify their advisor/major professor and faculty of the courses in which they are enrolled of the need for a grief absence in a timely manner, but no later than one week from the student's initial knowledge of the situation, b) provide appropriate verification of the grief absence as specified by the advisor/major professor and faculty, and c) complete all missed work as determined in consultation with the advisor/major professor and faculty. For more information, see <https://reg.msu.edu/ROInfo/Notices/GriefAbsence.aspx>

It is the responsibility of the advisor/major professor to: a) determine with the student the expected period of absence, acknowledging that some bereavement processes may be more extensive than others depending on individual circumstances, b) receive verification of the authenticity of a grief absence request upon the student's return, and c) make reasonable accommodations so that the student is not penalized due to a verified grief absence.

If employed as a RA or TA, the graduate student must also notify their employer. Both employer and student will swiftly communicate to determine how the student's responsibilities will be covered during their absence. TAs should refer to the bereavement policy outlined in Article 18 of the MSU Graduate Employees Union Collective Bargaining Agreement (<http://geuatmsu.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/GEU-2019-2023-FINAL-1-1.pdf>).

### **Jury Duty**

If you are called for Jury Duty, notify your RA supervisor to make arrangements for coverage of your work duties; if you have a TA, notify your TA supervisor to make arrangements for coverage of your teaching duties. Note that the [GEU Contract](#) provides specific information regarding what is required for TAs in terms of proof of jury duty service, payment during times of service, and reporting back to work.

## **X. ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **Academic Policies**

All students enrolled in the academic programs of the School of Human Resources and Labor Relations are held accountable to academic regulations specified by the School, the College of Social Science, The Graduate School, and by the University in effect at the time they are admitted.

#### **A. Registration**

Students should consult the Chair of the PhD committee and/or their Guidance Committee chairs about their academic programs when they have questions about program requirements prior to course registration (see <https://reg.msu.edu/AcademicPrograms/>). Students should register as soon as possible for courses in order to help ensure their enrollment in the courses necessary to complete their coursework requirements. Students can enroll for spring semester classes when they enroll for the fall semester. The School guarantees a seat for all required classes.

#### **B. Overrides**

If a student desires an override to get into a closed section of a class, s/he needs to secure the permission of the course instructor. There is no guarantee that an override will be granted when the section is at its maximum capacity. Instructors make these decisions because the number of students in their sections has a strong impact on the class dynamics and the faculty member's resources. If the course is taught by an adjunct instructor, permission for overrides should be granted by the Associate Director for Graduate Programs. The Associate Director will exercise judgment with regard to balance and size of sections taught by adjunct instructors. Overrides in other departments/programs should be sought through the class instructor in the appropriate department.

#### **C. Student Records**

Student records will be maintained in accordance with Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities, Article 3: (<https://spartanexperiences.msu.edu/about/handbook/graduate-student-rights-responsibilities/article-three-student-records-at-michigan-state-university.html>).

All application materials of matriculated students, except official transcripts and School and University applications will be kept in a separate file accessible to the Coordinator of Graduate Programs and the Associate Director for Graduate Programs. It will be destroyed upon graduation. Application materials of non-matriculated students will be kept for one academic year and then will be destroyed.

A student's file will be available to the student's advisor/Guidance Committee chair, PhD Committee Chair, and other faculty on an "as needed" basis. In special circumstances when additional confidentiality is required, student folders will be kept in the Director's office.

## **XI. RELEASE OF INFORMATION ABOUT STUDENTS**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) restricts the School and individual faculty members from releasing information concerning a student's academic record. Students who want the School and/or individual faculty members to provide letters of reference or recommendation *that include details from the student's academic record* (e.g., GPA, a grade in a course) must complete, sign, and return a release of information authorization to the Office of the Coordinator of Graduate Programs. This form will then be filed in the student's permanent academic record. It can be amended and/or terminated at any time. The FERPA form to request a reference can be found at:

<http://www.reg.msu.edu/read/StudentReferenceRequestReleaseForm.pdf>

The School of Human Resources and Labor Relations adheres to the University's policies pertaining access to and release of student academic records. Absent a need to know, the University generally does not release student information to third parties, including parents, without the student's written permission. There are limited exceptions to these operating guidelines (such as health and safety emergencies), depending on the circumstances of a particular case. The following MSU website provides detailed information regarding the University's policies on student records:

<http://www.reg.msu.edu/ROInfo/Notices/PrivacyGuidelines.aspx>

The release and disclosure of student records maintained by the University are, in large measure, governed by state and federal laws and by University policy. The FERPA restricts the School and individual faculty members from releasing information concerning a student's academic record.

Students who want individual faculty members to provide letters of reference or recommendation *that include details from the student's academic record* such as a specific grade, must complete, and sign a FERPA form. The individual faculty member should keep a copy of the FERPA release for his/her/their own records. It can be amended and/or terminated at any time. The FERPA form to request a reference can be found at:

<http://www.reg.msu.edu/read/StudentReferenceRequestReleaseForm.pdf>

## **XII. DEPARTMENTAL STUDENT RECORDS**

All application materials of matriculated students will be kept in an application file accessible to the student's advisor/Guidance Committee chair, the Chair of the PhD Committee and other faculty on an as needed basis. It will be destroyed upon graduation. Application materials of non-matriculated students will be kept for one academic year and then will be destroyed. Students have the right to view their own application materials except for any letters of recommendation that have been designated as confidential. To view this file, the student needs to make an appointment with the Graduate Programs office assistant.

The student's academic file will be available to the student's advisor/Guidance Committee chair, the Chair of the PhD committee and other faculty on an as needed basis. In special circumstances when additional confidentiality is required, academic folders will be kept in the director's office. Students have the right to view this file. To view this file, the student needs to make an appointment with the Graduate Programs office assistant.

The typical PhD student's academic file has three sections that include the following information:

- 1) Grade folder: Grade reports and other pertinent information concerning grades such as notices from the Dean's Office about grade issues, administrative action forms, admissions information such as the acceptance letter from the School, Recommended Action Form, PhD Program Application Form, Graduate School Application form, and undergraduate and graduate school transcripts.
- 2) Guidance Committee folder: Annual Progress Reports, reports of the Guidance Committee, research Internship forms, records of the comprehensive exam, any amendment forms, and the dissertation committee member's Progress Report form.
- 3) Miscellaneous: Miscellaneous information pertaining to student's academic progress such as leave of absence requests, awards and fellowship forms.

If students are hired as employees in the School (e.g., as an instructor), their personnel records will be stored in a separate file, as is outlined in the Graduate Employees Union/Michigan State University (GEU/MSU) contract and the Graduate Students Rights and Responsibilities (GSSR - <https://grad.msu.edu/sites/default/files/content/gssr/GSRR.pdf>). The file may include: graduate student instructional rating reports (or summaries), formal written evaluations, and any supplementary information (GSSR 2.5.2.2.). Only information pertaining to the student's employment status will be in the personnel record file (MSU/GEU Article 22). This information may be used by the student or faculty members for such matters as renewal of assistantships, teaching assignments, recommendations, and the need for further training (GSSR 2.5.2.3.). Students have the right to access this file. Students have a right to have a copy of all or part of their personnel record, with costs incurred in copying assessed to the student. Students have the right to place a written response to any evaluation contained in his/ her personnel record (MSU/GEU Article 22). All personnel records are maintained by the School office manager. Students need to make an appointment with the office manager to view these files. GEU limits views of

files to three times per year. For additional information about the GEU, including the current GEU/MSU contract, please go to <http://www.geuatmsu.org/>.

### **XIII. GRADING**

Grading in each course is based on evaluation by the instructor of a student's academic performance. Students are informed of all course requirements and grading criteria at the beginning of each course. Grading criteria for each course are included in the course syllabi. The University uses a numerical grading system, a supplemental credit-no credit system, and a limited pass-no grade system. There are limitations on the amount of course work that can be completed on the credit-no credit system and the pass-no grade system. The credit-no credit and pass-no pass systems are only available for courses that are specified as having either of those grading systems. Students should consult the instructor if they have questions about grading.

#### **A. Criteria**

Numbered grades represent categories of performance.

4.0 - Excellent	I - Incomplete
3.5 - Good	DF - Deferred
3.0 - Passable	CR-NC - Credit-No Credit
2.5 - Low	P-N - Pass-No Grade
2.0 - Lowest	
1.5-0.0 - No credit given	

Academic credit is awarded at the minimum level of 2.0 for PhD students. The minimum cumulative grade point average required for graduation is a 3.0. A PhD student who accumulates grades below 3.0 (including N grades in the P-N grading system) in more than two courses of three or more credits each will be dismissed.

#### **B. Postponement of Grading**

When special or unusual circumstances occur, the instructor can postpone assignment of the student's final grade in a course by submitting an I-Incomplete or DF-Deferred in lieu of a grade.

##### *1. Incomplete Grades*

Incomplete (I) grades are given only when

- a) The student has completed 6/7 of the course but is unable to complete the class work and/or take the final examination because of illness or other compelling reasons; and
- b) has done satisfactory work in the course; and
- c) in the instructor's judgment, the student can complete the required work without repeating the course.

Compelling reasons are:

- a) Illness or injury that makes it impossible for the student to complete course work and are documented by a physician's written statement attesting to the serious nature of the condition; or
- b) Illness or injury of a close relative for whom the student is responsible for providing daily care and documented by physician's written statement attesting to the serious nature of the condition;

When these conditions are met, the instructor files a REPORT OF I- INCOMPLETE at the time course grades are due. This specifies what the student must do and when to remove the I-Incomplete. The School will give a copy to the student and will retain a copy for at least one year.

### **Removing Incomplete Grades:**

All required work must be completed and a grade must be reported to the Office of the Registrar no later than **the middle of the student's next semester in attendance** (summer session excluded) if that semester is within one calendar year following receipt of the I-Incomplete. The exception to this deadline is that an instructor can submit an Administrative Action form stating that course structure necessitates delay of make-up grading until the end of the student's next semester in attendance.

**Failure to complete the required work by the due date will result in a grade of 1/0.0 or I/N**, depending on the grading system under which the student was enrolled. It is the student's responsibility to complete the course work and submit it to the instructor, allowing adequate time for the instructor to grade the work and submit the grade to the Registrar by the stated deadline. A student who does not register for MSU classes subsequent to the receipt of an I-Incomplete has one calendar year to complete the required work; after one year, the I-Incomplete remains part of the student's academic record, and the course can be completed only by re-enrollment.

**An extension of time for completion of the required work** can be approved by the College offering the course only by means of an Administrative Action form documenting physician-certified illness or other extraordinary circumstances such as those for which an initial Incomplete grade is given as described previously.

## 2. *Deferred Grades*



A deferred (DF) grade applies to the numerical, the CR-NC and P-N system. Deferred grades are given to students who are doing satisfactory work but cannot complete it because of reasons acceptable to the instructor. The required work must be completed and a grade reported within six months. If not completed within the time limit, the DF-Deferred will be changed to DF/N. This rule does not apply to graduate thesis or dissertation work.

### **C. Repeating a Course**

The University policy is that “a graduate student who received a grade of 2.0 or, CR, or P in a course may not repeat the course on a credit basis with the following exception: with the approval of the associate dean, a graduate student may repeat a course in which a grade of 2.0 or 2.5 was received. The number of credits that a graduate student may repeat is determined by the student's Guidance Committee, in accordance with unit policies.” The School of HRLR policy is that a maximum of two, three-credit hour courses can be repeated. Whenever a course is repeated on a credit basis, the last grade and credits earned completely replace the previous grade in computing grade-point averages; however, all entries remain a part of the student's permanent academic record.

Any course repeated for credit must be taken on the same grading system under which the course was taken the first time. A student will be given only one opportunity to repeat a course.

## **XIV. RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT OF RESEARCH (RCR) REQUIREMENTS** (<https://grad.msu.edu/rcr>)

As part of the annual progress report, doctoral students are required to submit a record of the RCR training they received over the past year. Each student is responsible for keeping his/her/their participation in RCR training events up to date via their GradPlan. The documentation for each component is described below. The documentation material will be reviewed annually to ensure students are in compliance. The students should provide documentation to their advisor or the chair of their Guidance Committee.

## 1. Year 1

All new Doctoral students will complete 4 CITI online modules within the first year of enrollment in their program. Go to the ABILITY information management system at <https://ora.msu.edu/train> to log into CITI and complete your on-line RCR training. This is the system that must be used for proper documentation of training.

- Introduction to the Responsible Conduct of Research
- Authorship
- Plagiarism
- Research Misconduct

## 2. Discussion-Based Training

All Doctoral students will complete 6 hours of discussion-based training prior to receiving their degrees. These hours can be completed through the following means:

- Every Doctoral student will be required to take 1.5 hours of overview training in responsible conduct of research. This overview training will be offered during student orientation sessions at the beginning of the semester. The content of this training will cover subjects such as plagiarism, research misconduct, and the use of human subjects in research.
- Completion of RCR-related workshops. A list of these workshops can be found at <https://grad.msu.edu/rcr>.
- Other acceptable events may include, but are not limited to, a seminar session devoted to an RCR subject, extended discussions on an RCR subject covered in a methodology class and/or with their academic advisor.
  - Documentation of such events may include: a document that contains a brief summary of the content, signed by the student and instructor of the event or an email from the course instructor to the student that contains a summary of the relevant content.

## 3. Year 2

Within the first 2 years of enrollment in their program, doctoral students will complete 3 additional MSU online training modules, to be selected from the following list. Go to the ABILITY information management system at <https://ora.msu.edu/train> to log into CITI and complete your on-line RCR training. This is the system that must be used for proper documentation of training.

- CITI Collaborative Research
- CITI Conflicts of Interest
- CITI Data Management

- CITI Financial Responsibility
- CITI Mentoring
- CITI Peer Review
- Human Research Protection/ IRB Certification (in <http://Train.ORA.msu.edu>)
- Rigor and Reproducibility Course (in production)

#### **4. Annual Refresher Training**

Starting in year 3, all doctoral students must complete 3 hours of annual refresher training. This may include:

- Discussion-based training such as the overview training offered during student orientation sessions at the beginning of the semester.
- RCR-related workshops offered through the Graduate School (<https://grad.msu.edu/rcr>).
- Online CITI courses beyond the 7 required in basic training (<https://ora.msu.edu/train>).

## **XV. OPTIONS FOR ELECTRONIC THESES AND DISSERTATION SUBMISSIONS**

### **A. Requests for hold/embargo on publication of documents submitted to ProQuest:**

Students submitting a thesis/dissertation to ProQuest now can request a hold/embargo of publication by ProQuest by contacting the Graduate School at [msuetds.approval@grd.msu.edu](mailto:msuetds.approval@grd.msu.edu) or calling (517) 353-3220. In response to the request, the Graduate School will send directly to the student a form that needs to be completed and turned to the Graduate School prior to the document submission to ProQuest. The form needs to be signed by the student's major professor and by the Associate Dean of the student's college. The request for the hold/embargo may be for six months, one year or two years. Requests for a period longer than six months must include a brief justification for the length of the requested hold/embargo.

### **B. Creating an Open Researcher and Contributor ID (ORCID) at the time of submission of electronic documents to ProQuest:**

At the time of submission to ProQuest, authors now have the opportunity to create an ORCID that provides researchers with a unique identifier for linking their research outputs and activities. An ORCID:

- Improves recognition of research contributions
- Reduces form-filling (enter data once, re-use it often)
- Works with many institutions, funders, and publishers
- Is a requirement of many journal manuscript submission systems and grant application forms.

To learn more about ORCID go to: <https://vimeo.com/237730655>

## **XVI. GRADUATION**

### **A. Certification for Graduation and the Degree Audit in GradPlan**

Certification for PhD candidates follows the procedures established by the Graduate School and Registrar. Please see <https://grad.msu.edu/etd/> for more information.

The certification process consists of an assessment of the student's academic record, via the degree plan in GradPlan. In order for the PhD director to approve of the final degree certification form, the degree audit must also be complete in GradPlan. If the student does not meet the program or degree requirements and/or does not have a completed degree plan and degree audit in GradPlan, the final degree certification form will not be approved and the student cannot graduate and earn the PhD.

### **B. Graduation Ceremonies**

The University holds commencement ceremonies at the Breslin Center in May and December. Graduate students from all disciplines participate in this event. It is a traditional graduation ceremony open to all graduate students who are graduating from MSU that semester. Students finishing their requirements during the summer may participate in the May or December ceremonies.

## **XVII. STUDENT ACADEMIC GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

The University has established a formal grievance procedure for graduate students. What follows is a detailed description of the procedure. Each right of an individual places a reciprocal duty upon others: the duty to permit the individual to exercise the right. The student, as a member of the academic community, has both rights and duties. Within that community, the student's most essential right is the right to learn. The University has a duty to provide for the student those privileges, opportunities, and protections which best promote the learning process in all its aspects. The student also has duties to other members of the academic community, the most important of which is to refrain from interference with those rights of others which are equally essential to the purposes and processes of the University. (GSRR Article 1.2)

The *Michigan State University Student Rights and Responsibilities* (SRR - <http://splife.studentlife.msu.edu/student-rights-and-responsibilities-at-michigan-state-university>) and the *Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities* (GSRR - <https://grad.msu.edu/gsrr>) documents establish the rights and responsibilities of MSU students and prescribe procedures to resolve allegations of violations of those rights through formal grievance hearings. In accordance

with the SRR and the GSRR, the SHRLR Graduate Program has established the following Hearing Board procedures for adjudicating graduate student academic grievances and complaints. (See GSRR 5.4.)

**A. Jurisdiction of the SHRLR Graduate Program Hearing Board:**

- a) The Hearing Board serves as the initial Hearing Board for academic grievance hearings involving graduate students who allege violations of academic rights or seek to contest an allegation of academic misconduct (academic dishonesty, violations of professional standards or falsifying admission and academic records). (See GSRR 2.3 and 5.1.1.)
- b) Students may not request an academic grievance hearing based on an allegation of incompetent instruction. (See GSRR 2.2.2)
- c) If an instructor fails to comply with the provisions of the Code of Teaching Responsibility (see <https://reg.msu.edu/academicprograms/Print.aspx?Section=514>), students may register complaints directly with that instructor. Students may also take complaints directly to SHRLR Director or Associate Director for Graduate Programs. Unsatisfied graduate students may request a formal grievance hearing before their department hearing board (see GSRR Article 5). Before doing this, all students are encouraged to meet with the University Ombudsperson.

**B. Composition of the Hearing Board:**

- a) The Program shall constitute a Hearing Board pool no later than the end of the tenth week of the spring semester according to established Program procedures. Hearing Board members serve one-year terms with reappointment possible. The Hearing Board pool should include both faculty and graduate students. (See GSRR 5.1.2 and 5.1.6.)
- b) The Chair of the Hearing Board shall be the faculty member with rank who shall vote only in the event of a tie. In addition to the Chair, the Hearing Board shall include an equal number of voting graduate students and faculty. (See GSRR 5.1.2, and 5.1.5.)
- c) The Program will train hearing board members about these procedures and the applicable sections of the GSRR. (See GSRR 5.1.3.)

**C. Referral to the Hearing Board:**

- a) After consulting with the instructor and appropriate unit administrator, graduate students who remain dissatisfied with their attempt to resolve an allegation of a violation of student academic rights or an allegation of academic misconduct (academic dishonesty, violations of professional standards or falsifying admission and academic records) may request an academic grievance hearing. When appropriate, the School Director, in consultation with the Dean, may waive jurisdiction and refer the request for an initial hearing to the College Hearing Board. (See GSRR 5.3.6.2.)
- b) At any time in the grievance process, either party may consult with the University Ombudsperson. (See GSRR 5.3.2.)

- c) In cases of ambiguous jurisdiction, the Dean of The Graduate School will select the appropriate Hearing Board for cases involving graduate students. (See GSRR 5.3.5.)
- d) Generally, the deadline for submitting the written request for a hearing is the middle of the next semester in which the student is enrolled (including Summer). In cases in which a student seeks to contest an allegation of academic misconduct and the student's dean has called for an academic disciplinary hearing, the student has 10 class days to request an academic grievance to contest the allegation. (See GSRR 5.3.6.1 and 5.5.2.2.)
- e) If either the student (the complainant) or the respondent (usually, the instructor or an administrator) is absent from the university during that semester, or if other appropriate reasons emerge, the Hearing Board may grant an extension of this deadline. If the university no longer employs the respondent before the grievance hearing commences, the hearing may proceed. (See GSRR 5.4.9.)
- f) A written request for an academic grievance hearing must (1) specify the specific bases for the grievance, including the alleged violation(s), (2) identify the individual against whom the grievance is filed (the respondent) and (3) state the desired redress. Anonymous grievances will not be accepted. (See GSRR 5.1 and 5.3.6.)

**D. Pre-Hearing Procedures:**

- a) After receiving a graduate student's written request for a hearing, the Chair of the Department or School Director will promptly refer the grievance to the Chair of the Hearing Board. (See GSRR 5.3.2, 5.4.3.)
- b) Within 5 class days, the Chair of the Hearing Board will:
  - 1) forward the request for a hearing to the respondent and ask for a written response;
  - 2) send the names of the Hearing Board members to both parties and, to avoid conflicts of interest between the two parties and the Hearing Board members, request written challenges, if any, within 3 class days of this notification. In addition to conflict of interest challenges, either party can challenge two hearing board members without cause (GSRR 5.1.7.c);
  - 3) rule promptly on any challenges, impanel a Hearing Board and send each party the names of the Hearing Board members. If the Chair of the Hearing Board is the subject of a challenge, the challenge shall be filed with the Dean of the College, or designee (See GSRR 5.1.7.). Decisions by the Hearing Board chair or the College Dean (or designee) on conflict of interest challenges are final;
  - 4) send the Hearing Board members a copy of the request for a hearing and the respondent's written response, and send all parties a copy of these procedures.
- c) Within 5 class days of being established, the Hearing Board shall review the request, and, after considering all requested and submitted information:
  - 1) accept the request, in full or in part, and promptly schedule a hearing.
  - 2) reject the request and provide a written explanation to appropriate parties; e.g., lack of jurisdiction. (The student may appeal this decision.)

- 3) the GSRR allows the hearing board to invite the two parties to meet with the Hearing Board in an informal session to try to resolve the matter. Such a meeting does not preclude a later hearing. However, by the time a grievance is requested all informal methods of conflict resolution should have been exhausted so this option is rarely used. (See GSRR 5.4.6.)
- d) If the Hearing Board calls for a hearing, the Chair of the Hearing Board shall promptly negotiate a hearing date, schedule an additional meeting only for the Hearing Board should additional deliberations on the findings become necessary, and request a written response to the grievance from the respondent.
- e) At least 5 class days before the scheduled hearing, the Chair of the Hearing Board shall notify the respondent and the complainant in writing of the (1) time, date, and place of the hearing; (2) the names of the parties to the grievance; (3) a copy of the hearing request and the respondent's reply; and (4) the names of the Hearing Board members after any challenges. (See GSRR 5.4.7.)
- f) At least 3 class days before the scheduled hearing, the parties must notify the Chair of the Hearing Board the names of their witnesses and advisor, if any, and request permission for the advisor to have voice at the hearing. The chair may grant or deny this request. The Chair will promptly forward the names given by the complainant to the respondent and visa versa. (See GSRR 5.4.7.1.)
- g) The Chair of the Hearing Board may accept written statements from either party's witnesses at least 3 class days before the hearing. (See GSRR 5.4.9.)
- h) In unusual circumstances and in lieu of a personal appearance, either party may request permission to submit a written statement to the Hearing Board or request permission to participate in the hearing through an electronic communication channel. Written statements must be submitted to the Hearing Board at least 3 class days before the scheduled hearing. (See GSRR 5.4.9c.)
- i) Either party to the grievance hearing may request a postponement of the hearing. The Hearing Board may either grant or deny the request. (See GSRR 5.4.8.)
- j) At its discretion, the Hearing Board may set a reasonable time limit for each party to present its case, and the Chair of the Hearing Board must inform the parties of such a time limit in the written notification of the hearing.
- k) Hearings are closed unless the student requests an open hearing, which would be open to all members of the MSU community. The Hearing Board may close an open hearing to protect the confidentiality of information or to maintain order. (See GSRR 5.4.10.4.)
- l) Members of the Hearing Board are expected to respect the confidentiality of the hearing process. (See GSRR 5.4.10.4.and 5.4.11.)

**E. Hearing Procedures:**

- a) The Hearing will proceed as follows:
  - 1) Introductory remarks by the Chair of the Hearing Board: The Chair of the Hearing Board introduces hearing panel members, the complainant, the

respondent and advisors, if any. The Chair reviews the hearing procedures, including announced time restraints for presentations by each party and the witnesses, and informs the parties if their advisors may have a voice in the hearings and if the proceedings are being recorded. Witnesses shall be excluded from the proceedings except when testifying. The Chair also explains:

- In academic grievance hearings in which a graduate student alleges a violation of academic rights, the student bears the burden of proof.
- In hearings in which a graduate student seeks to contest allegations of academic misconduct, the instructor bears the burden of proof.
- All Hearing Board decisions must be reached by a majority of the Hearing Board, based on a "clear and convincing evidence." (See GSRR 8.1.18.)

(See GSRR 5.4.10.1 and 8.1.18.) For various other definitions, see GSRR Article 8.)

- 2) If the complainant fails to appear in person or via an electronic channel at a scheduled hearing, the Hearing Board may either postpone the hearing or dismiss the case for demonstrated cause. (See GSRR 5.4.9a.)
- 3) If the respondent fails to appear in person or via an electronic channel at a scheduled hearing, the Hearing Board may postpone the hearing or, only in unusual circumstances, hear the case in his/her/their absence. (See GSRR 5.4.9-b.)
- 4) If the respondent is absent from the University during the semester of the grievance hearing or no longer employed by the University before the grievance procedure concludes, the hearing process may still proceed. (See GSRR 5.3.6.1.)
- 5) To assure orderly questioning, the Chair of the Hearing Board will recognize individuals before they speak. All parties have a right to speak without interruption. Each party has a right to question the other party and to rebut any oral or written statements submitted to the Hearing Board. (See GSRR 5.4.10.2.)
- 6) Presentation by the Complainant: The Chair recognizes the complainant to present without interruption any statements relevant to the complainant's case, including the redress sought. The Chair then recognizes questions directed at the complainant by the Hearing Board, the respondent and the respondent's advisor, if any.
- 7) Presentation by the Complainant's Witnesses: The Chair recognizes the complainant's witnesses, if any, to present, without interruption, any statement directly relevant to the complainant's case. The Chair then recognizes questions directed at the witnesses by the Hearing Board, the respondent, and the respondent's advisor, if any.
- 8) Presentation by the Respondent: The Chair recognizes the respondent to present without interruption any statements relevant to the respondent's case. The Chair then recognizes questions directed at the respondent by the Hearing Board, the



complainant, and the complainant's advisor, if any.

- 9) Presentation by the Respondent's Witnesses: The Chair recognizes the respondent's witnesses, if any, to present, without interruption, and statement directly relevant to the respondent's case. The Chair then recognizes questions directed at the witnesses by the Hearing Board, the complainant, and the complainant's advisor, if any.
- 10) Rebuttal and Closing Statement by Complainant: The complainant refutes statements by the respondent, the respondent's witnesses and advisor, if any, and presents a final summary statement.
- 11) Rebuttal and Closing Statement by Respondent: The respondent refutes statements by the complainant, the complainant's witnesses and advisor, if any, and presents a final summary statement.
- 12) Final questions by the Hearing Board: The Hearing Board asks questions of any of the participants in the hearing.

#### **F. Post-Hearing Procedures:**

a) Deliberation:

After all evidence has been presented, with full opportunity for explanations, questions and rebuttal, the Chair of the Hearing Board shall excuse all parties to the grievance and convene the Hearing Board to determine its findings in executive session. When possible, deliberations should take place directly following the hearing and/or at the previously scheduled follow-up meeting. (See Section IV.D above.)

b) Decision:

- 1) In grievance (non-disciplinary) hearings involving graduate students in which a majority of the Hearing Board finds, based on "clear and convincing evidence," that a violation of the student's academic rights has occurred and that redress is possible, it shall recommend an appropriate remedy to the Department Chair or School Director. Upon receiving the Hearing Board's recommendation, the Department Chair or School Director shall implement an appropriate remedy, in consultation with the Hearing Board, within 3 class days. If the Hearing Board finds that no violation of academic rights has occurred, it shall so inform the Chair or Director. The Chair of the Hearing Board shall promptly forward copies of the final decision to parties and the University Ombudsperson. (See GSRR 5.4.11.)
- 2) In grievance (non-disciplinary) hearings involving graduate students in which the Hearing Board serves as the initial hearing body to adjudicate an allegation of academic dishonesty and, based on "clear and convincing evidence," the Hearing Board finds for the student, the Hearing Board shall recommend to the Department Chair or School Director that the penalty grade be removed, the Academic Dishonesty Report be removed from the student's records and a "good

faith judgment" of the student's academic performance in the course take place. If the Hearing Board finds for the instructor, the penalty grade shall stand and the Academic Dishonesty Report regarding the allegation will remain on file, pending an appeal, if any to the College Hearing Board within 5 class days of the Hearing Board's decision. If an academic disciplinary hearing is pending, and the Hearing Board decides for the instructor, the graduate student's disciplinary hearing before either the College Hearing Board or the Dean of The Graduate School would promptly follow, pending an appeal, if any, within 5 class days. (See GSRR 5.5.2.2 and 5.4.12.3)

c) **Written Report:**

The Chair of the Hearing Board shall prepare a written report of the Hearing Board's findings, including recommended redress or sanctions for the complainant, if applicable, and forward a copy of the decision to the appropriate unit administrator within 3 class days of the hearing. The report shall indicate the rationale for the decision and the major elements of evidence, or lack thereof, that support the Hearing Board's decision. The administrator, in consultation with the Hearing Board, shall then implement an appropriate remedy. The report also should inform the parties of the right to appeal within 5 class days following notice of the decision, or 5 class days if an academic disciplinary hearing is pending. The Chair shall forward copies of the Hearing Board's report and the administrator's redress, if applicable, to the parties involved, the responsible administrators, the University Ombudsperson and the Dean of The Graduate School. All recipients must respect the confidentiality of the report and of the hearing board's deliberations resulting in a decision. (See GSRR 5.4.12 and 5.5.2.2)

**G. Appeal of the Hearing Board Decision:**

- a) Either party may appeal a decision by the Hearing Board to the College Hearing Board for cases involving (1) academic grievances alleging violations of student rights and (2) alleged violations of regulations involving academic misconduct (academic dishonesty, professional standards or falsification of admission and academic records.) (See GSRR 5.4.12.)
- b) All appeals must be in writing, signed and submitted to the Chair of the College Hearing Board within 5 class days following notification of the Hearing Board's decision. While under appeal, the original decision of the Hearing Board will be held in abeyance. (See GSRR 5.4.12, 5.4.12.2 and 5.4.12.3.)
- c) A request for an appeal of a Hearing Board decision to the College Hearing Board must allege, in sufficient particularity to justify a hearing, that the initial Hearing Board failed to follow applicable procedures for adjudicating the hearing or that findings of the Hearing Board were not supported by "clear and convincing evidence." The request also must include the redress sought. Presentation of new evidence normally will be inappropriate. (See GSRR 5.4.12.1, 5.4.12.2 and 5.4.12.4.)

**H. Reconsideration:**

If new evidence should arise, either party to a hearing may request the appropriate Hearing Board to reconsider the case within 30 days upon receipt of the hearing outcome. The written request for reconsideration is to be sent to the Chair of the Hearing Board, who shall promptly convene the Hearing Board to review the new material and render a decision on a new hearing. (See GSRR 5.4.13.)

## **I. File Copy:**

The Chair of the Department or School Director shall file a copy of these procedures with the Office of the Ombudsperson and with the Dean of The Graduate School. (See GSRR 5.4.1.)

## **XVIII. STUDENT GRADE GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

The Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities document establishes general rules for grade appeals for students. In such a hearing, the student has the burden of proof that her/his grade has been based on factors other than, or in addition to, performance, such as race, sex, personal animosity or the like. Neither disappointment with a grade, hard work that was not rewarded, nor an instructor's very high standards constitute grounds for a viable grade grievance.

The grievant must put in writing what is believed was unfair and the remedy being sought. When the School receives those items in writing, a hearing panel will be convened. Half the panel will be composed of SHRLR doctoral students; the other half, faculty members. Because the chair must be a faculty member, the director will designate a faculty member to chair the hearing unless s/he has a real or apparent conflict of interest. No one on the panel should have any immediate involvement with the course or the parties, nor have any conflict of interest, whether real or apparent.

Each party will have access to any documents that constitute "evidence." Each party has a right to present whatever s/he considers to be relevant, to have supporting witnesses if s/he wishes, to question the other party and any witnesses, to rebut any "evidence," and to have counsel from within the University either for advisory purposes or to present the case on her/his behalf. A witness should be confined to her/his own recollection, not that of others.

Procedurally, the grievant will make the first statement during the hearing, to be followed by the instructor. No interruptions are allowed during opening presentations. The chair will direct questions, by the parties and by the panel, after the presentations.

Panel members will be allowed to question the parties whenever they wish. This is an informal hearing. The panel will listen to the facts of the matter at hand. Additional information could be requested. The chair will keep the discussion focused and ensure that civility is maintained. Time limits are at the chair's discretion.

There will be a written record of the session that can be used in an appeal. Both parties will be asked to make brief closing statements if they wish to do so. Both parties, and any attending persons, will then be excused and the panel will meet in executive session to deliberate. The panel's decision and written rationale will be distributed to the parties. This can be used in an appeal.

Appeals must be justifiable. An appeal is a review of the record for procedural and due process issues. It is not a fresh hearing or an opportunity for introduction of new issues. Appeal of a

School decision is made to the College of Social Science. Either party can appeal. The parties should consult the MSU publication, *Graduate Students Rights and Responsibilities*, for further information concerning grievance procedures.

## **XIX. ACADEMIC STANDING AND STUDENT REVIEW (ASSR)**

### **A. Definition**

SHRLR students must maintain acceptable academic standing. On the rare occasions when students do not maintain acceptable standing, the Academic Standing and Student Review (ASSR) process is used to assist students in meeting program requirements. It is not a formal grievance procedure. Review of the standing of students who are experiencing academic or performance problems is a process intended to provide timely and ongoing assessment and support to students who need assistance. This process is designed to be helpful to students as well as protect the academic standards of the School and the ethics and standards of the HRLR profession. The ASSR accesses the resources of the School, College and University to assist students to be successful in their pursuit of a PhD in HRLR. The ASSR is not a student complaint or grievance procedure. If a student believes that a grade(s) has been assigned unfairly or that a violation of her/his student rights has occurred, the student should initiate an informal complaint or formal grievance (see above). The ASSR is initiated by faculty on behalf of a student whose academic problems are threatening her/his status as a student in the School.

### **B. Reasons for Calling an ASSR**

An ASSR is called to determine whether or not the student can continue in the program, provided that specified remedies are found. The table below provides examples of events that can trigger an ASSR, possible steps a student must take to address the situation, and consequences of not completing the steps. In some cases, the PhD Director will recommend that a student develop and complete a plan in order to stay in the program; in other cases, the student will be asked to leave the program or be dismissed.

Table 5: Examples

Examples of Precipitating Events	Possible Student Steps to Rectify the Situation	Consequences of Not Completing Steps
Student's GPA falls below 3.0. PhD Director convenes an ASSR.	Student must present a plan describing how s/he will raise GPA during the next semester. The plan must be approved by the ASSR members.	Student will be dismissed from the program if the GPA is below 3.0 for second consecutive semester.
Student receives a second grade below a 3.0. PhD Director convenes an ASSR.	Depending on the results of the ASSR, student may be required to repeat the courses to attain a grade of 3.0 or above.	If the student is required to repeat courses, s/he will be dismissed from the program if unable to raise grades to 3.0 or above.
Allegations of unethical conduct made by any student or faculty member require an ASSR. Appropriate actions beyond the School will be taken if indicated.	If allegations are not substantiated, student will be able to remain in the program and must strictly adhere to MSU and School standards.	If allegations are substantiated, student will be dismissed from the program. Depending on the misconduct, appropriate authorities will be notified.

### **C. ASSR Process**

Typically, the PhD Program Director will schedule and chair the ASSR. Occasionally, a faculty member may wish to call an ASSR. The student's advisor/chair and classroom instructor (as appropriate) will be asked to attend the meeting. The student is expected to attend and can bring an "advocate-supporter" who must be someone from the University community, e.g., a faculty member or another student. The process is designed to be informal and non-adversarial. After exploring the situation, the PhD Director, in consultation with participants, make a recommendation that will be reported to the Director of the School who could concur, modify or reject it. The recommendation may include placing the student on probation pending the successful completion of the recommended plan, strongly recommending that the student voluntarily leave the program permanently or temporarily (i.e., take a leave of absence for a specified time period), or dismissing the student from the program. The student is able to appeal or dispute the recommendation to the Director of the School. The recommendation will be formulated in a written report of the hearing submitted to the student and to the Director of the School.

The report and recommendation will be kept in a confidential folder available only to the PhD Director and the student's advisor/chair. It will not be used in a reference letter or any other similar document. The student may write one addendum to the report if s/he wishes.

## **XX. INFORMAL ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW**

On rare occasions, the PhD Program Director will call a meeting with students, faculty, and administrators to informally attempt to resolve a specific student problem without invoking the formal ASSR process. These meetings are informal and are designed to promote informal resolution of issues. If the meeting does not produce a resolution or if the student does not meet the conditions set forth in the meeting, an ASSR will be called.

## **UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

### **XXI. RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS**

#### **A. Guidelines**

Students conducting research involving human subjects must: 1) Complete Human Research Protection training prior to engaging in human subject research. This training can be accessed at: <https://hrpp.msu.edu/training/index.html>. 2) Complete an application to the MSU Institutional Review Board (IRB) to get approval for the intended research prior to beginning any research. The link for the application is at the following: <https://hrpp.msu.edu/click/index.html>.

Under the regulations, all investigators (faculty &/or graduate students) who will conduct research that involves human subjects must submit an application and approval of the research protocol must be in place before the investigator begins data collection.

A faculty member on a student's thesis committee (for Plan A students only) or the HRLR 890 faculty member (for student's conducting research as part of an independent study) will be considered the principal investigator who is responsible for the research project when submitting an application for approval to the IRB.

These regulations are of specific concern to graduate students because "research" includes the preparation of Master's Theses and Doctoral Dissertations. Examples of research involving human subjects include: interviews, in person, telephone or mail surveys, behavioral or educational testing, laboratory studies, observation of individual or group behavior, collection of blood (or other biologic) samples.

Following the Graduate School's policy, all doctoral dissertations must undergo IRB review, and documentation of IRB approval will be submitted for degree audit.

#### **B. How the IRB Review Process Works**

The review process begins when an investigator submits a complete application to the MSU Human Research Protection Program office. The program assigns the application an IRB log

number. Depending upon the level of risk to subjects in the protocol, the project is assigned to one of three review categories (exempt from full review, expedited review, full review) and sends it to one, two or five reviewers, respectively. If the reviewer (or reviewers) is satisfied that the rights and welfare of the human subjects are adequately protected, s/he approves it. However, if the reviewer has concerns, the reviewer returns written comments to the Human Research Protection Program office for transmission to the investigator. The investigator must then send a response to each comment, in writing, to Human Research Protection Program which will forward it to the reviewer(s). If the proposal is either an exempt or expedited proposal, an approval letter can be issued as soon as the reviewer (or reviewers) approves. When a proposal received full (five-member sub- committee) review, an approval letter is issued after the proposal is discussed and approved by vote of the full committee at its monthly meeting.

## **XXII. MSU Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct and Title IX Policy**

(<https://civilrights.msu.edu/policies/relationship-violence-and-sexual-misconduct-and-title-ix-policy.html>)

MSU has established the Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct and Title IX Policy in keeping with the university's commitment to fostering a safe and inclusive campus community.

The policy, administered by OIE, prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex and sexual harassment, including gender-based harassment, sexual assault/misconduct, relationship violence and stalking.

For complete information, including definitions contained in the policy, read the Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct and Title IX Policy.

### **A. Seeking Assistance in Filing a Complaint**

Students who believe they are the victims of sexual harassment may seek information and assistance from:

- the chairperson, director, or dean of the relevant unit
- supervisory support personnel
- University Ombudsperson
- MSU Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS)
- MSU Center for Survivors
- Student Life or Residence Hall staff
- Sexual Assault Crisis and Safety Education Program at the MSU Counseling Center
- Faculty or Staff Academic Advisors
- Faculty Grievance Official
- Anti-discrimination Judicial Board Coordinator



- Office of Student Employment

Please note that aside from the underlined resources above, all the other resources are mandatory reporters—they have reporting obligation when the employee becomes aware of relationship violence, stalking, or sexual misconduct that involves a member of the University community (faculty, staff, or student) or occurring at a University event or on University property.

### **XXIII. MSU ANTI-DISCRIMINATORY POLICY**

MSU Anti-Discrimination Policy (ADP) was approved by the Board of Trustees on April 9, 1993 and revised on December 5, 2003, April 13, 2007, and October 30, 2015.  
( [https://hr.msu.edu/policies-procedures/university-wide/ADP\\_policy.html](https://hr.msu.edu/policies-procedures/university-wide/ADP_policy.html))

The ADP outlines the types of prohibited discrimination and harassment at MSU. Under the ADP, university community members are prohibited from engaging in acts which discriminate against or harass any university community member on the basis of age, color, gender, gender identity, disability status, height, marital status, national origin (language), political persuasion, race, religion, sexual orientation, veteran status or weight.

Please consult the ADP linked above for details of the policy and information on informal resolution and complaints.

### **XXIV. OFFICE OF THE UNIVERSITY OMBUDSPERSON**

Conflicts, disagreements, and issues sometimes arise during the course of a graduate program. If you find yourself in this situation and have exhausted the internal resources for resolving the issue, you may contact the Office of the University Ombudsperson.

The Office of the University Ombudsperson provides assistance to students, faculty, and staff in resolving University-related concerns. Such concerns include student-faculty conflicts; communication problems; concerns about the university climate; and questions about what options are available for handling a problem according to Michigan State University policy. The University Ombudsperson also provides information about available resources and student/faculty rights and responsibilities. The office operates as a confidential, independent, and neutral resource. It does not provide notice to the University; that is, it does not speak or hear for the University.

Contact the Ombudsperson at any point during an issue when a confidential conversation or source of information may be needed. The Ombudsperson will listen to your concerns, give you information about university policies, help you evaluate the situation, and assist you in making plans to resolve the conflict.

Contact information:

Office of the University Ombudsperson  
129 N. Kedzie Hall  
(517) 353-8830  
[ombud@msu.edu](mailto:ombud@msu.edu)  
<https://ombud.msu.edu/>

## **XXV. DISMISSAL POLICIES FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS IN THE COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCE**

To remain in good academic standing, graduate students in the College of the Social Science are expected to:

- Adhere to the expectations and responsibilities outlined in the Spartan Life Policies and General Student Regulations, the Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities, and the College of Social Science Community Code of Conduct.
- If also employed by Michigan State University, graduate students must adhere to University Policies stipulated in the Employee Handbook , including Rules Governing Personal Conduct of Employees.
- Adhere to University, College and program guidelines for academic integrity.
- Maintain a semester *and* cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or higher.
- Accumulate no more than two required courses of two or more credits each that fall below a 3.0 grade.
- Make satisfactory progress towards degree completion each semester.
- Complete program milestones in a timely manner according to the timelines set by the graduate program.
- Complete all qualifying or comprehensive exams no later than Year 5 from date of the first course counted in the doctoral plan of work (PhD Degrees)
- Complete all degree requirements for the doctoral degree no later than Year 8 from the date of the first course counted in the doctoral plan of work (PhD Degrees)

Each semester, the College of Social Science generates End of Semester Review letters for students whose course grades, semester grade point average, and/or cumulative grade point average fall below 3.0 or there is a pattern of academic performance that suggests the student is not meeting College or graduate program standards. These letters are sent to the student's unit Chair/Director and Graduate Program Director and require a formal response back to the College about the results of the unit's academic review with the student. Units should communicate to students in writing about these concerns and when appropriate, notify them that they are on academic probation or if necessary, will be dismissed from the program.

Academic dishonesty reports filed by members of the faculty trigger additional review at the program, College, Graduate School and University levels. At a minimum, the College will contact the program to trigger a review of the allegation. Repeat offenses require consequences that exceed the penalty or failing grade options.

Academic misconduct outside of the classroom trigger additional review at the program, College and Graduate School levels. Academic misconduct allegations are reviewed using the policies and procedures identified in the *Graduate Student Academic Hearing Procedures for the College of Social Science, Article 5 of the Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities* and *June 2009 Procedures for Allegations of Misconduct in Research*.

**XXVI. POLICIES FOR DISMISSAL FROM TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS**  
**Article 12 GEU Contract**

Section IV. Procedure for Unsatisfactory Performance

When employment performance is unsatisfactory, the employment duties may be reduced and employment fraction and pay may be reduced correspondingly, or employment may be terminated. In cases of unsatisfactory employment performance, the matter will first be discussed with the Employee prior to any action being taken. If the Employer determines that the existing situation can be corrected by the Employee and is of such a nature that correction is appropriate, the Employee will be given not less than one calendar week from date of discussion to make the correction. A written summary of such a discussion will be available at the written request of the Employee provided the request is received within forty-eight (48) hours of the discussion. When allowed by law, a copy of this summary will be provided to the Union.

Section V. Discipline

The parties recognize the authority of the Employer to suspend, discharge, or take other appropriate disciplinary action against Employees for just cause. Discharge may result from an accumulation of minor infractions as well as for a single serious infraction. Whenever it is appropriate, the Employer shall give the Employee advance notice of its intent to hold an investigatory interview. An Employee shall be entitled to the presence of a Union Representative at an investigatory interview if he/she has reasonable grounds to believe that the interview may be used to support disciplinary action against him/her, and he/she requests representation. If any discipline is taken against an Employee, the Employee will receive a copy of the disciplinary action. In the event that an Employee is discharged, the Employee will receive a copy of the notice of discharge, including a summary of the reasons for the discharge. When allowed by law, the Union will be provided a copy of any notice of discharge. An Employee may appeal a suspension or discharge beginning at Step Two of the Grievance Procedure.

Section VI. Appeals

If a determination results in a discharge or a reduction in fraction of employment and pay during the term of employment, a grievance may be submitted beginning at Step Two of the Grievance Procedure, provided the grievance is submitted in writing within the fifteen (15) calendar day period following notice of the discharge or reduction. In the event of an arbitration, if the Arbitrator does not find for the Employer, the Arbitrator may only make a finding of fact and award pay but not reinstatement. Such pay shall not exceed an amount that the Employee would have earned from the date of discharge to the end of the term of employment.

## **XXVII. REQUIREMENTS FOR REQUESTING SCHOOL AND WORK ACCOMMODATIONS**

If you are a MSU student or employee and you have a disability, you can register with the RCPD and you may be eligible to receive accommodations. RCPD recognizes that accommodations may be required in order to assist individuals in maximizing their educational and workplace experience. **While the university provides reasonable accommodations, we do not change essential academic requirements or job functions. Accommodation determinations are based on documentation and individualized needs assessments.** See <https://www.rcpd.msu.edu/services>

**MSU employees, including student employees, can request reasonable accommodations for the workplace. The Statement of Employee Accommodation Determination (SEAD) is the primary method of documentation that enables employees to validate and communicate their needs to supervisors.** Reasonable employee accommodations are determined through a partnership between RCPD, MSU's Office of Employee Relations (OER) Accommodations Specialist, the employee, and the supervisor. See <https://www.rcpd.msu.edu/get-started/employee-accommodations>

The SEAD is individualized and cannot be generated until the employee completes the following steps:

1. [Identify and Register a Disability](#). This includes self-identifying through the [RCPD MyProfile](#) and submitting sufficient medical [documentation](#).
2. Request Accommodations
3. Participate in the employee accommodation review process, including a needs assessment meeting with RCPD and OER and submission of a current position description.

The OER Accommodations Specialist also engages with the supervisor regarding the accommodation requests prior to determination and production of the SEAD. For a comprehensive overview of the employee accommodation process, please see the [MSU Disability and Reasonable Accommodations Policy](#).

Supervisors are responsible for maintaining confidentiality and for facilitating the granted accommodations outlined on the SEAD. The SEAD should be held in a confidential place separate from the employee's primary file.

## **XXVIII. EARLY TERMINATION OR RESIGNATION OF ASSISTANTSHIPS**

If a graduate assistant resigns an assistantship or the assistantship is terminated early during a semester, such that the appointment does not meet minimum duration standards (53 calendar days in Fall and Spring; 46 calendar days in Summer), the student will be assessed tuition for all credits carried, and those who are not Michigan (in-state) residents will be assessed out-of-state tuition.

## **XXIX. CONCLUSION**

We hope that the material presented in these *Guidelines* helps you learn more about the program, and the expectations that faculty, staff and the research community place upon SHRLR students.

By its very nature, several sections of a student handbook describe policies and procedures for responding to difficulties that students may encounter during their graduate education. However, the great majority of graduate students either do not experience academic difficulty or such matters are handled in a non-adversarial approach through joint problem solving. Throughout students' experiences in graduate school, their strengths and potential should be acknowledged. Graduate students are ultimately responsible for their educational experience and active engagement in learning is encouraged.

We hope you will continue to have a connection with the School long after you have completed your doctoral program.

### XXX. UNIVERSITY RESOURCES

- *Academic Programs*  
<http://reg.msu.edu/ucc/ucc.aspx>
- *Graduate Students Rights and Responsibilities (GSRR)*  
<http://splife.studentlife.msu.edu/graduate-student-rights-and-responsibilities>
- *Graduate Employees Union* (labor union representing graduate teaching assistants at MSU)  
<http://www.geuatmsu.org>
- *Guidelines for Graduate Student Advising and Mentoring Relationships*  
<https://grad.msu.edu/msu-guidelines-graduate-student-mentoring-advising>
- *Guidelines for Integrity in Research and Creative Activities*  
<https://grad.msu.edu/researchintegrity>

<sup>1</sup> This policy does not apply to the conduct of a contractor's internal affairs, nor does it apply to the conduct of contractual engagements to which the University is not a party.

<sup>2</sup> Limitations are inappropriate if they are not directly related to a legitimate University purpose.

<sup>3</sup> For purpose of this policy, "employment opportunity" is defined as job access and placement, retention, promotion, professional development, and salary.

<sup>4</sup> University ordinances, written regulations and policies, and published ADJB decisions approved by the President, provide guidance on the harassing acts prohibited by Section 2 and the discriminatory acts prohibited by Section 2.

<sup>5</sup> Consultation with one or more of the following may be useful:

- the chairperson, director, or dean of the relevant unit,
- supervisory support personnel,
- the Women's Resource Center, Worklife Office
- the Ombudsman,
- the Office of Minority Student Affairs,
- Student Life or Residence Halls Staff,
- Sexual Assault Crisis & Safety Education,
- faculty or staff academic advisors,
- the MSU Counseling Center, and
- the Faculty Grievance Official.

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<sup>i</sup> The content in this PhD Handbook is subject to change. Doctoral students and all interested parties shall be notified with respect to any changes herein in a timely manner.